

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A composition for treating an autoimmune disease, comprising a therapeutically effective amount of a CD40 antagonist in a pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.
2. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is small molecule.
3. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is a protein.
4. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is an antibody.
5. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is a monoclonal antibody.
6. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is a humanized monoclonal antibody.
7. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is a human monoclonal antibody.
8. The composition of claim 1, wherein said CD40 antagonist is antibody 5H7.
9. The composition of claim 1, wherein said autoimmune disease is psoriasis.

10. A method of treating a mammal afflicted with an autoimmune disease, comprising administering to said mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a CD40 antagonist thereby reducing the severity of said autoimmune disease.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein said antagonist blocks the interaction between CD40 and CD40L.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein said antagonist is an antibody that binds to CD40.

13. The method of claim 10, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein said antibody is a humanized monoclonal antibody.

15. The method of claim 10, wherein said antibody is a human monoclonal antibody.

16. The method of claim 10, wherein said antibody is 5H7.

17. The method of claim 10, wherein said antagonist is a fragment of antibody 5H7.

18. The method of claim 10, wherein said autoimmune disease is a T-cell-mediated inflammatory skin disease.

19. The method of claim 10, wherein said autoimmune disease is psoriasis.

20. The method of claim 10, wherein said mammal is human.
21. The method of claim 10, wherein said CD40 antagonist is administered intraperitoneally or intradermally.
22. A method of treating a mammal afflicted with a neoplastic disease, comprising administering to said mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a CD40 antagonist thereby reducing the severity of said neoplastic disease.
23. A method of treating a mammal afflicted with psoriasis, comprising administering to said mammal a therapeutically effective amount of a CD40 antagonist.